DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 312 676 CS 506 660

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TITLE	A National Survey of Graduate Education in Communication Research Ethics.
PUB DATE	89
NOTE	30p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Communication Association (39th, San Francisco, CA, May 25-29, 1989).
PUB TYPE	Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Communication Research; Doctoral Programs; *Ethics; Graduate Study; National Surveys; Questionnaires; *Research Methodology
IDENTIFIERS	*Media Education; Research Curriculum; Researcher Role; *Speech Communication Education

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine the status of Ph.D. communication education in research ethics. The study sought to discover the extent to which research ethics courses are being taught, identify the research ethics issues that are discussed in these courses or in research methods coursework, specify the reading material that are assigned in the area of research ethics, and inquire as to how instructors of research ethics acquired their own knowledge of research ethics. Fifty-nine Ph.D. communication programs in the United States were surveyed through a mail questionnaire. A 77% response rate was achieved. Results indicate that no Ph.D. communication program in the survey currently devotes an entire course to communication research ethics. Seventy percent of the programs surveyed offer a course partly dealing with ethics. In these courses, research ethics tend to be discussed 15% or less of total course time. "Lack of room in the curriculum" and "ethics issues adequately addressed in other courses" were the primary reasons cited for not devoting an entire course to research ethics. Issues dealing with confidentiality, informed consent, subjects' rights to withdraw, and institutional review boards were discussed to the greatest extent in coursework related to research ethics. The least discussed issues were involuntary self knowledge, the importance of information in final write-ups allowing for the assessment of ethical conduct, misinformation, "fudging" of data, the responsibility of the researcher to benefit society, physical/psychological harm, and the mechanics of debriefing. A limited range of reading materials on research ethics appear to be used, largely drawn from outside the discipline. Most instructors acquired their research ethics knowledge from experience doing research, personal reading, and informal conversation with colleagues. No instructors in the survey who teach coursework at least partially devoted to research ethics have themselves taken a separate course in research ethics at the graduate level. Approximately 67% indicated having taken a course at the graduate level partially devoted to research ethics. (Author)

A NATIONAL SURVEY OF GRADUATE EDUCATION IN COMMUNICATION RESEARCH ETHICS

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Introduction

The topic of "ethics" has recently gained significant attention within the speech communication discipline, as evidenced by the 1985 establishment of the Speech Communication Association's Commission on Communication Ethics, sessions on the ethical dimensions of communication at national and regional conventions, and fresh publication in the area (Jaksa & Pritchard, 1988; Boileau, 1985; Andersen, 1984; Johannesen, 1983). Our knowledge of communication education in the realm of "ethics", however, is scant. We do know that 46 percent of schools offering mass communication programs offer one or more courses substantially devoted to ethical considerations but that less than 25 percent of students of mass communication will ever enroll in such courses (cited in Cooper, 1985). We also know that at the organizational communication level professionals in the field see as "very important" any curriculum components aimed at developing competency in business ethics and interpersonal ethics (Staley and Shockley-Zalabak, 1985). The research ethics education of our discipline's doctoral students, however, is an area of which we have no general knowledge. Although we know something about today's communication researchers' attitudes toward ethical issues in the doing of research (Gordon, 1983), we know nothing about what today's researchers are teaching tomorrow's communication researchers about issues of "rightness" and "wrongness" when studying human communicators.

Ever since the Milgram (1965) study in social psychology, there have been continued recommendations within the social science disciplines that more concerted attention be given to developing greater ethical

sensitivity among researchers (Sieber, 1982). It was probably not until 1969, however, that the first graduate course was offered on the relationship between ethics and social science research, this taught at Harvard University by Herbert Kelman and Donald Warwick (Warwick, 1980). A review of course offerings across the nation leads one to conclude that formal education in ethics for researchers in psychology, sociology, and anthropology is not extensive, with perhaps no more than 15 schools around the country offering graduate courses that are entirely devoted to the ethical conduct of research using human beings in these mainstream social science disciplines (Warwick, 1980).

One might wonder, what is our future generation of communication researchers being taught about ethics and its relation to their research practices? What are the main ethical lessons to which they are being exposed? What are they being asked to read and discuss that will sensitize them to potential ethical problems and solutions in their own research and that of others? How did these students' professors acquire their own knowledge of ethics? The only published data that is even peripherally related comes from a recent investigation of the status of instruction in introductory undergraduate communication research methods courses (Frey & Botan, 1988). Within these courses at the colleges surveyed, ethics of research" was ranked 25th in terms of course time devoted to that topic, receiving approximately 2 percent of total course time or .85 of a single class period. (It should be noted that at least 40 percent, and possibly most, of the colleges in the sample of 98 schools were not Ph.D. granting institutions.)

The need to assess graduate education in communication research ethics is increasing. The growing number of Ph.D. communication students in particular is staggering: in 1971 there were slightly more than 100 Ph.D.

degrees in communication granted across the United States (Baker & Wells, 1975). However, by 1985 that number had more than doubled (Statistical Abstracts, 1988). Yet there is no established knowledge base about how these graduates are acquiring their ethical sensitivities.

Along with the increasing number of graduate students, more communication research is being conducted today than ever before. As research and publication are becoming even more critical to the tenure and promotion of university faculty members, issues of research ethics will play an on-going role in communication research. This study attempts to provide at least preliminary information on the ethics education of those future communication researchers who will help shape the communication theory of the 1990s and beyond.

The purpose of the study was to investigate how communication doctoral students are gaining ethical research sensitivities in their Ph.D. programs. The study was organized into four main parts: coursework offered in research ethics, ethical issues addressed in coursework, reading materials used in research ethics coursework, and how course instructors acquired their research ethics knowledge.

First, communication Ph.D. programs were surveyed to discover what coursework is offered on research ethics and how that coursework is taught. Warwick (1980) indicated that research ethics are integrated into research methods courses in many social science disciplines, while informal methods of transmitting ethics information (dealing with issues as they arise in the classroom or research) are also relied upon (Christians, 1985; Stanley, 1984). However, citing the need to study ethics issues in depth, a separate course in research ethics is recommended by a number of scholars (Boileau, 1985; Gordon, 1985; Hochheimer, 1983; Stanley, 1984; Warwick, 1980).

Since the literature indicates diversity as to how research ethics is taught and should be taught, there is a need to discover how research ethics issues are currently being taught in doctoral communication programs.

Second, the study sought to discover the types of research ethics issues are examined in graduate communication coursework. Numerous studies and articles have suggested various ethical topics that need to be discussed to aid young researchers in understanding the implications of various ethical issues (Bulmer, 1982; American Psychological Association, 1982; Hook, Kurts & Todorovich, 1978; Sieber, 1982). The need to address the issues of deception, misinformation, and the rights of subjects in research designs is also indicated in the literature (Bok, 1978; Gordon, 1983, 1985; Hochheimer, 1983). It has also been suggested that failing to include descriptions of ethical practices in research reports makes it impossible to improve the understanding of ethical issues affecting research design and methodology (Adair, Dushenko, & Lindsay, 1985). To provide baseline information on ethical issues discussed in communication Ph.D. programs, the study attempted to identify key issues being currently taught.

Third, the study attempted to compile a list of relevant readings in the area of research ethics. Scholars continue to collect and categorize ethics information relevant to the communication discipline (Arnett, 1985; Boileau, 1985). While books and articles have been written on research ethics issues, several researchers have recommended more substantive literature dealing with ethical research principles and frameworks be written (Christians, 1985; Gordon, 1985; Hochheimer, 1983; Sieber, 1982; Warwick, 1980). Therefore, a list of relied-upon readings might be of use to both professor and graduate student.

Fourth, the ethics background of communication research educators needs to be addressed since we lack basic data in this pedagogical realm.

Therefore, this study attempts to provide an introductory view of research ethics education of graduate students in Ph.D. communication programs. Four main areas will be studied: coursework offered in research ethics, research issues addressed in the coursework, reading material used in the coursework, and how course instructors acquired their knowledge of research ethics.

Methods

Sample

The study was limited to those Ph.D. communication programs listed in one or more of four sources: Directory of Graduate Programs in the Communication Arts and Sciences 1986-1987 (Hall, 1985) as well as two earlier editions of this directory, and Peterson's Graduate and Professional Programs: An Overview 1985 (Conley and Frary, 1984). To be included, the program had to be listed as having a doctoral program in one or more of the following areas: Intercultural Communication, Interpersonal Communication, Organizational Communication, Oral Interpretation, Pragmatic Communication, Public Address, Rhetorical & Communication Theory, Speech Communication Education, Radio-TV-Film, and Journalism/Mass Communication.

A cover letter and survey instrument were sent to each of the resulting 59 Ph.D. communication programs. The cover letter, addressed to the graduate director of each program, asked that the survey questionnaire be given to a faculty member responsible for teaching research methods or research ethics for their graduate program. A 46 percent return (17

responses) for the first mailing was received. Five weeks later, a second cover letter, a second questionnaire, and a self-addressed, stamped return envelope were sent to each of the 31 respondents who had not initially responded. After sending the second mailing, an additional 15 percent return (9 responses) was received. A third follow-up mailing was sent to the programs who had not yet responded. An additional 17 percent return (10 responses) was received after the third mailing. The three mailings resulted in a 78 percent total response rate (46 responses). However, contrary to expectations, six respondents indicated that their program did not offer a Ph.D. communication degree. These six responses were not calculated. There were, therefore, 40 useable responses, representing 75 percent of the total number of Ph.D. in communication studies programs in the United States.

Instrumentation

A four-page questionnaire utilizing both closed and open-ended questions was developed and pilot tested before being sent to respondents. The survey instrument was organized into four parts. Part I dealt with classes currently being taught in either research ethics or research methods. Respondents were asked to indicate if their department taught a separate course in research ethics or in what type of course ethics instruction was included. Part II inquired as to the course instructor's educational background in research ethics and research methods. Part III provided a list of specific items identifying the major sorts of ethical issues that might be discussed in a research ethics class or in research methods classes in a Ph.D. communication program. Respondents were asked to check appropriate scale points on these provided items. Respondents were also asked via an open-ended item to list the three main ideas they try to convey to their

students about research ethics. Part IV pertained to readings in the area of research ethics assigned or drawn upon by course instructors. Open-ended questions were used to collect titles of books, articles, and films used in research ethics or research methods courses.

RESULTS

Coursework Offered in Research Ethics

Data analysis indicated that no Ph.D. communication program surveyed currently offers a separate, graduate-level course specifically focusing on the study of communication research ethics. However, approximately 70 percent (28 programs) did offer one or more courses partly devoted to ethics instruction. Of these courses partly devoted to ethics issues, only 70 percent (30 courses) were required at the Ph.D. level.

In courses partly devoted to ethics, respondents were asked what percentage of total course time addressed research ethics issues. As shown in Table 1, analysis of the data indicated that 87.5 percent of the respondents spent 15 percent or less of course time devoted to ethical issues. Seven out of ten respondents indicated that they spent ten percent or less of total course time discussing research ethics issues.

Respondents were asked to indicate the main reasons why their department does not offer a course dealing entirely with the ethics of communication research. Analysis of the data, summarized in Table 2, indicated that two primary reasons were most frequently cited for not offering a course devoted entirely to communication research ethics. Lack of

Table 1

Percentage of Total Course Time Devoted to Research Ethics Issues

Percentage Indicated by Respondents	Number	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
50%	1	2.5	100.0
35%	1	2.5	97.5
30%	1	2.5	95.0
20%	2	5.0	92.5
15%	6	15.0	87.5
12%	1	2.5	72.5
10%	8	20.0	70.0
7%	5	12.5	50.0
5%	9	22.5	37.5
3%	2	5.0	15.0
2%	2	5.0	10.0
1%	2	5.0	5.0

room in the curriculum was cited by 31.5 percent of respondents. Ethics covered adequately in other courses was cited by 28.9 percent of respondents. In addition, two secondary reasons were indicated: no clear

evidence that ethical responsibility can be taught in the classroom and no qualified person to teach the course. Each of these secondary reasons were cited by 15.7 percent of the respondents.

Table 2

Reasons For Not Offering a Course Devoted Entirely to Communication Research Ethics

Reasons	N	Percentage
No available room in the curriculum	12	31.5
Ethics covered adequately in other courses	11	28.9
No clear evidence that ethical responsibility can be taught in a classroom	6	15.7
No qualified person to teach the course	6	15.7
Lack of interest among the faculty	5	13.2
Good instructional materials do not exist	5	13.2
Lack of interest among the students	4	10.5
Course on research ethics issues taught in another department on campus	2	5.3
Not enough resources	1	2.6
Assume students don't need to be taught to be ethical	1	2.6

Research Issues Addressed in Coursework

Respondents were asked to indicate which issues or research ethics were discussed, and to what extent, in research ethics or research methods courses. Table 3 summarizes course issues responses. To assess which research ethics issues were addressed to the greatest extent, percentages of respondents indicating course issues addressed "very much" were analyzed. Respondents rated four course discussion issues quite highly: confidentiality of subjects' identities was discussed "very much" by 52.9 percent of respondents; informed consent and subjects' right to withdraw were both discussed "very much" by 44.1 percent of respondents; and institutional review boards were discussed "very much" by 35.3 percent of respondents.

Analysis of the data indicated that seven issues were rated "not at all" or "very little" by 25 percent or more of the respondents. Involuntary self-knowledge (the researcher involuntarily leads or subtly coerces subjects into self examination) was cited by 50 percent of respondents as being discussed "not at all" or "very little". Importance of information in final write-ups of research that allows for ready assessment of ethical conduct was not discused much by 40 percent of the respondents. Also discussed "not at all" or "very little" are the deliberate presentation of misinformation to subjects, the "fudging" of data, the responsibility of the researcher to benefit society, physical/psychological harm, and the mechanics of debriefing. Again, each of these topics was discussed "not at all" or "very little" by 25 percent or more of the respondents.

Table 3

Adjusted Frequency Distribution of Extent Course Issues Addressed in Communication Research or Ethics Classes

	Percentages of Respondents					
	Not at all	Very little				Very much
Issues	1	2	3	4	5	6
"Fudging" of data	14.3%	14.3%	5.7%	25.7%	17.1%	22.9%
Withholding of significant information	14.3	9.7	9.7	19.3	19.3	22.6
Misinformation	15.6	15.6	9.4	15.6	25.0	18.8
Deception	8.8	8.8	11.8	14.7	26.5	29.4
Voluntary participation	11.8	8.8	11.8	20.6	17.6	29.4
Informed consent	5.9	11.8	5.9	20.5	11.8	44.1
Subjects' right to withdraw	8.8	11.8	2.9	23.5	8.8	44.1
Institutional review boards	5.9	8.8	8.8	32.4	8.8	35.3
Involuntary self-knowledge	40.0	10.0	6.7	26.6	10.0	6.7
Physical/psychological harm	15.6	9.4	9.4	31.2	18.8	15.6
Research risks vs. benefits	12.5	9.4	15.6	25.0	18.8	18.8
Importance of debriefing	12.1	12.1	12.1	21.2	12.1	30.3
Mechanics of debriefing	15.6	9.4	15.6	25.0	15.6	18.8
Confidentiality of subjects' identities	2.9	14.7	5.9	11.8	11.8	52.9
Importance of information in final write-ups to assess ethical conduct	22.6	19.4	3.2	25.8	12.9	16.1
Responsibility as researcher to benefit society	15.2	12.1	3.0	24.2	9.1	36.4

Respondents were also asked via an open-ended item to identify the three main ideas they try to convey to their students regarding the ethical dimensions of communication research. The findings are categorized and summarized in Table 4.

Table 4

Main Ideas Conveyed to Students About Communication Research Ethics

Reason	Number	Percentage
Protection of subjects	22	31.4
Honesty and accuracy in reporting	21	30.0
Pursue significant research	8	11.4
Deception problems	6	8.6
Moral responsibility	3	4.3
Risks and benefits of research	2	2.9
Relationship between university & cooperative institutions	2	2.9
Disclosure of researcher's procedures and rationale	1	1.4
Access to research findings	1	1.4
Covert observation problems	1	1.4
Criteria for evaluating "good" research	1	1.4
Qualitative vs. quantitative ethical dilemmas	1	1.4
Philosophical hermeneutics	1	1.4

Analysis of the open-ended data indicated two main ideas conveyed by instructors most often regarding the ethical dimensions of communication research: protection of subjects was reported by 31.4 percent of respondents (N = 22) and honesty and accuracy in reporting results was indicated by 30 percent of the respondents (N = 21). The third-ranked topic, the importance of pursing significant research inquiry, was mentioned by only 11.4 percent of the respondents.

Reading Material on Research Ethics

Respondents were asked to cite reading material assigned in research ethics or research methods classes to increase students' knowledge of and sensitivities to research ethics issues. A complete listing of readings on ethics issues assigned by respondents is found in Table 5. Only two works were listed that deal entirely with research ethics: Betrayers of the Truth: Fraud and Deceit in the Halls of Science (Broad & Wade, 1983) and Principles in the Conduct of Research with Human Participants (American Psychological Association, 1982). No books entirely devoted to research ethics were indicated by 55 percent of respondents, and 42 percent of respondents did not answer this question.

Thirty eight percent of respondents indicated that sixteen different books partly dealing with research ethics were required in graduate classes. Two books were each mentioned three times: The Practice of Social Research (Babbie, 1986) and Research in Speech Communication (Tucker, Weaver, & Berryson-Fink, 1981). The other books were only mentioned once. "None" was indicated by 28 percent of respondents, and no answer was given by 38 percent of respondents.

Table 5

A Listing of required Reading Materials
Related to Research Ethics

Required Books Related to Research
Ethics

American Psychological Association (1982). Principles in the Conduct of Research with Human Participants. Washington, D. C.: American Psychological Association, Inc.

American Psychological Association (1983). Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. 3rd Edition. Washington, D. C.: American Psychological Association.

Babbie, E. (1986). The Practice of Social Research. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co.

Bowers, J. W. and Courtwright, J. A. (1984). Communication Research Methods. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman & Co.

Broad, W., & Wade, N. (1983). Betrayers of the Truth: Fraud and Deceit in the Halls of Science. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Clifford, J. and Marcus, G. E. (1986). Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography. University of California Press.

Cook, T. and Campbell, D. T. (1979) Quasi-Experimentation: Design and Analysis Issues for Field Settings. Chicago: Rand McNally College Publishing Co.

Dallmayr, F. R. and McCarthy, T. A., (Eds.). (1977). Understanding and Social Inquiry. University of Notre Dame Press.

Gould, S. J. (1983). The Mismeasure of Man. New York: Norton.

Johannesen, R. L. (1983). Ethics in Human Communication. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.

Jones, R. A. (1985). Research Methods in the Social and Behavioral Sciences. Sinauer Assocs.

Table 5, contd.

Kaplan, A. (1963). The Conduct of Inquiry. New York. Harper and Row.

Kerlinger, F. N. (1986). Foundations of Behavioral Research. New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.

Guba, E. G. and Lincoln, Y. S. (1983). Effective Evaluation. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Medawar, P. (1982). Pluto's Republic: Incorporating "The Art of the Soluble" and "Induction and Intuition in Scientific Thought". New York: Oxford University Press.

Modern Language Association of America (1977). MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations. New York: Modern Language Association.

Tucker, R., Weaver, R., and Berryson-Fink, C. (1981). Research in Speech Communication. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc.

Required Articles Related to Research Ethics

Aronson, E. and Carlsmith, J. M. (1968). Experimentation in social psychology. In Lindzey, G., & Arsonson, E. (Eds.) The Handbook of Social Psychology (Vol. 2). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co.

Gross, L. (1983). Pornography and social science research, Journal of Communication, 33, 107-111.

Guidelines from Department of Health & Human Services (Federal Register 1/1981)

Guidelines from university regarding human subjects protection and privacy

Koocher, G. P. (1977), Bathroom behavior and human dignity, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 35, 120-21.

Middlemist, R. D., Knowles, E. S. and Matter, C. F. (1977). What to do and what to report: A reply to Koocher, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 35, 122-24.

Table 5, contd.

Malamuth, N. M, Heim, M., and Feshback, S. (1980). Sexual responsiveness of college students to rape depictions: Inhibitory and disinhibitory effects, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 38, 399-408.

Malamuth, N. M., Feshback, S., and Heim, M. (1980) Ethical issues and exposure to rape stimuli: A reply to Sherif, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 38, 413-415.

Sherif, C. W. (1980). Comment on ethical issues in Malamuth, Heim, and Feshbach's "sexual responsiveness of college students to rape depictions: Inhibitory and disinhibitory effects", Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 38, 409-412.

Zillman, D. and Bryant, J. (1983). Higher moralities, Journal of Communication, 33, 111-114.

Fifteen percent of the respondents indicated a total of 11 articles. Three respondents indicated that their students read their university institutional review board guidelines in discussing ethics issues. All other articles were only mentioned once. "None" was indicated by 35 percent of respondents, and 52 percent of respondents did not answer.

Instructors' Acquisition of Research Ethics Knowledge

Respondents were asked how they acquired their research ethics knowledge. Six percent (N = 2) indicated they had taken a graduate-level course devoted entirely to research ethics. Sixty seven percent of respondents (N=25) indicated they had taken a course devoted partly to ethical research issues. Thirty two percent of respondents (N=12) indicated they had not taken such a course.

Instructors were also asked about methods other than formal coursework they have used to acquire knowledge of research ethics. As shown in Table 6, three informal methods were primarily used by respondents to acquire ethics knowledge: experience personally doing research was cited by 94.4 percent of respondents; personal reading was cited by 69.4 percent; and informal conversations with colleagues was cited by 58.3 percent of respondents.

Table 6

Methods Instructors Used to Acquire Research Ethics Knowledge

Methods	Responses	
	N	Percentage
Personal experience doing research	34	94.4%
Undertook personal reading in the area	25	69.4
Informal conversation with colleagues	21	58.3
Participated in symposia or panels on ethics at communication conferences or conventions	10	27.7
Committee assignments	9	25.0
Took course devoted in part to research ethics at undergraduate level	5	13.8
Took course devoted entirely to ethics at the undergraduate level	1	2.8

Discussion

This research project provides preliminary information and insight into communication research ethics instruction. First, it does not appear that research ethics are formally taught to a significant degree in Ph.D communication programs. Perhaps the most dramatic finding is that no Ph.D. communication studies program surveyed offers a course devoted entirely to communication research ethics. This is noteworthy when one considers that other social science disciplines offer at least some courses devoted entirely to

research ethics (Stanley, 1985; Warwick, 1980). However, Christians (1985) found that a separate ethics course in mass media programs stimulated the discussion of ethical issues across the entire curriculum, thereby having substantial program impact. The major reason given by respondents in this study for the absence of such a course was "no room available in the curriculum."

This survey further indicates that 30 percent of Ph.D. programs do not have even one course where research ethics issues are even partially discussed. In addition, only 70 percent of the 27 Ph.D. communication programs offering a course partially devoted to research ethics require such a course at the Ph.D. level. Thus, we might speculate that perhaps only five out of ten graduate communication students are required to take a graduate-level course that even partly addresses research ethics issues.

Of equal significance is the amount of time spent on ethical issues in courses only partially devoted to ethics. Respondents indicated that nearly nine out of ten research methods courses taken by graduate students discuss ethics issues fifteen percent or less of the total course time. Assuming a 15-week semester and a three-hour-per-week class, most Ph.D. communication students have formalized discussions of ethics issues only 2 to 7 hours of total course time. This would appear to be a meager amount of time to acquire the ethical sensitivities that doctoral students will need as future researchers.

It may be that some respondents feel that doctoral students will adequately gain ethical responsibility by discussing ethical issues as they arise in actual research projects. However, knowledge gained from these informal transmission methods could be rather inconsistent across students, instructors, and projects. It is reasonable to assume that no one can be

certain what issues might confront any given student, how these problems are handled by the instructor and student, and the depth and breadth of the philosophy of research ethics issues that the student thus acquires. This raises the question as to whether there is an actual difference in graduate students' ethical decision making in research ethics when the student is taught through formalized coursework versus informal transmission methods. Research is lacking that would contribute to an answer to this not unimportant question.

Second, insight was gained through this study about the ethics issues discussed in research courses. The course issues most discussed related to the protection of certain rights of subjects: confidentiality of subjects' identities, informed consent, voluntary participation, and institutional review boards. However, little attention is apparently given to such issues as these: involuntary self knowledge, importance of information in final write-ups to assess ethical conduct, misinformation, "fudging" of data, the responsibility of the researcher to attempt to benefit society, physical/psychological harm, and the mechanics of debriefing. It is surprising that such important issues and topics are treated "very little" or "not at all" in doctoral communication programs. Each of these items has been the object of major attention within the literature of the social sciences (Sieber, 1982; Holden, 1979; Adair, Dushenko & Lindsay, 1985; Geller, 1982; Gordon, 1988). The omission of these as serious topics of discussion is itself worthy of attention and discussion.

Third, through this research study insight was also gained as to the reading materials used to increase students' knowledge of and sensitivities to ethical decision making in the conduct of research. It would seem reasonable that comprehensive reading materials about research ethics

would help the graduate student acquire knowledge of ethical decision making. However, few books, articles, or films were listed by respondents. Only two books dealing entirely with ethics were cited by respondents, and few books even partially dealing with ethics were cited by more than one respondent. In addition, few ethics articles were listed by respondents. The ethics literature which is currently being drawn upon at the doctoral level within our field is apparently not abundant and mainly draws upon works from outside of our own discipline. It may be that there is a need to author books and articles on research ethics that are specifically applicable to communication research ethics. There does seem to be somewhat of a void in this resource area.

Fourth, further insight was gained into the reasons why research ethics is taught the way it is today by examining the research ethics backgrounds of current course instructors. It seems reasonable that the ways current course instructors acquired their ethics knowledge would have an impact on the way these professors teach ethics today. Only six percent of current instructors had taken a graduate course devoted entirely to research ethics. However, it was surprising to discover that only seven out of ten research methods instructors had taken a graduate-level course even partially devoted to research ethics.

When asked what methods other than formal coursework instructors have used to acquire research ethics issues, it is encouraging to note that more than nine out of ten course instructors have had personal experience doing research. Two other informal transmission methods were cited as ways to acquire ethics knowledge. One method was personal reading. However, based on the small list of course readings generated by respondents, it may be that this reading has not been extensive. The other

method of acquiring ethics knowledge was through informal conversation with colleagues. Presumably these conversations were about ethical problems arising in research.

In the final analysis, graduate instruction in communication research ethics is seemingly not intensive. The importance of a separate course in research ethics needs to be considered. Pedagogical choices in the teaching of research ethics need to be more explicitly examined. More reflection is needed as to what issues should be taught, and it appears more substantive literature and relevant literature needs to be written. As more communication research is undertaken now and in the future than ever before, the education in ethics of a future generation of communication researchers is a matter deserving concerted examination and dialogue within the communication discipline.

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